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"My Paintings Would Be No Different than a Picture in a Biology Textbook"

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Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

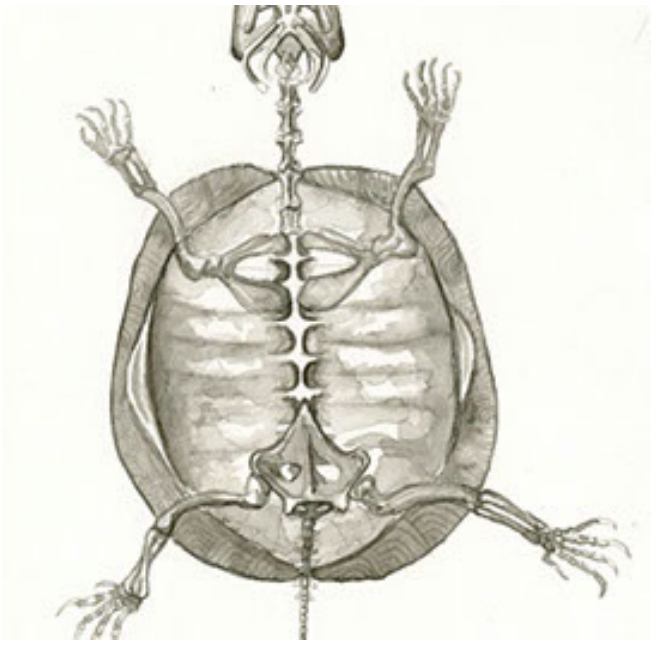

Figure 7

I find that there are innate balances in life, universal dichotomies that permeate our understanding of the world. My paintings are about a duality such as this that exists between art and science. We are told from youth that these subjects are poles in constant strain, as miscible as oil in

water. I spent thirteen years in school believing that I must choose between the two, that it is unnecessary to carry both with me. Drawn between a distinct love of each, I realized how vehemently I disagreed. Everything: every rock to every tree to every person is suspended between the two and therefore requires both to be fully understood.

There is science behind the pattern of a Barred owl's mating call, each note shaped by years of evolution's silent influence, known to us only by what we can hear. And there is art too, as the patterns become rhythms and the rhythms become dialects that are echoed through generations of owls, a steady symphony performed for the still of night. There science in the way the Atlas moth's wings have evolved to mimic the appearance of the head of a cobra in attempt to better its survival, a process that has taken thousands of years of chance mutation and natural selection to procure. And there is art here too, such as in the perfect symmetry and intricate coloring of the moth's wings, each seemingly hand painted by Mother Nature herself.

There is science in the way that the Pacific Sea Nettle uses light sensing organs to migrate each day from light, sunlit surface water to the dark depths of the ocean. And there is art too, in the way this light reflects and illuminates their gelatinous bodies, turning each into more of an ethereal floating lantern than organism.

Each perspective gives the other a significance beyond their own parameters. Once you study the minute details of an ecosystem and map the cohesion with which all of its components exist, if you do not stop to admire the beauty of this complexly balanced cohesion, your charts and graphs will lack significance to the reality of that ecosystem's existence. And, if you were to paint a landscape of that same ecosystem but never understand the complex patterns and relationships that function beneath your composition, then while you may have a pretty painting, its significance will forever be confined to the parameters of your canvas.

Ultimately, this is the goal behind my paintings, to coax the audience to go through this process of having to employ both art and science in order to find the significance of each piece. If someone were to look at them with only a scientific mindset, my paintings would be no different than a picture in a biology textbook captioned by its species description. Conversely, if someone were to look at my work with only an artistic mind, each painting becomes merely a pretty picture of an animal with no purposeful symbols available to provide deeper meaning. If I have succeeded in my goal as an artist, an application of both art and science will give each painting a significance greater than the sum of their individual components, and unless the viewer allows him or herself to use both in combination, they will miss why my paintings hold any significance at all.